

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

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INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0765

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT AO

SUBJECT: MPLA CONGRESS IN LUSAKA

REF: LUSAKA 1749

1. SUMMARY: TWO LOCAL SOURCES, BOTH RECENTLY RETURNED FROM LUSAKA, HAVE TOLD US THAT THE MPLA CONGRESS THERE BROKE UP WITHOUT A RESOLUTION OF THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE, DESPITE STRENUOUS EFFORTS BY ZAMBIAN AND OFFICIAL OBSERVERS FROM VARIOUS AFRICAN STATES. THE RESULT IS A NOW APPARENTLY IRREPARABLE ACHISM BETWEEN AUGUSTINHO NETO AND DANIEL CHIPENDA. END SUMMARY.

2. THE 400 DELEGATES TO THE MPLA CONGRESS MET AT A SECLUDED CAMP OUTSIDE LUSAKA AND WERE LOCKED IN AND GUARDED BY ZAMBIAN ARMY TROOPS. THE ONLY PEOPLE ALLOWED IN AND OUT WERE OFFICIALS OF THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND OBSERVERS FROM SEVERAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE OAU WHO ACTED AS CHAIRMEN AND INTERMEDIARIES.

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3. BEFORE THE CONGRESS BEGAN BOTH CHIPENDA AND NETO GAVE INTER-VIEWS TO A REPORTER FROM LUANDA. CHIPENDA STRONGLY CRITICIZED NETO'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MPLA AND ACCUSED HIM OF BEING MORE INTERESTED IN FOREIGN JUNKETS THAN THE MILITARY STRUGGLE WITH THE PORTUGUESE. NETO, HE ADDED, WAS CALLOUSLY UNCONCERNED ABOUT THE PROBLEMS FACED BY HIS FIGHTERS, AND UNAWARE OF THE SITUATION INSIDE THE EASTERN WAR ZONE, WHERE HE HAS SET MPLA BACK YEARS BY CONDONING INDISCRIMINATE KILLING OF TRIBAL LEADERS, RAPE AND FORCED LABOR. NETO, HE CONCLUDED, MUST BE MADE TO GIVE AN ACCOUNTING OF HIMSELF AND HIS ACTIONS TO THE CONGRESS.

4. NETO'S INTERVIEW, IN CONTRAST TO CHIPENDA'S BILL OF PARTICULARS, WAS A RAMBLING OREHASH OF THE PARTY'S SOCIALIST, MULTI-RACIAL PROGRAM. HE DID NOT TOUCH ON THE POINTS RAISED BY CHIPENDA AND ONLY ALLUDED TO THE CONGRESS IN GENERAL TERMS.

5. THE CONGRESS SEEMS TO HAVE GONE CHIPENDA'S WAY. HE DEMANDED THAT NETO ACCOUNT FOR HIS ACTIONS AND SUBMIT TO A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON HIS LEADERSHIP. NETO REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH EITHER DEMAND. THE 400 DELEGATES, ROUGHLY EQUALLY DIVIDED BETWEEN FOLLOWERS OF NETO, CHIPENDA AND THE "ACTIVE REVOLT" OF THE ELDERS UNDER MARIO PINTO DE ANDRADE, WERE FORCED BY THE OAU OBSERVERS TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES AND TO VOTE ON THEM NO MATTER WHAT NETO'S POSITION. BOTH OUR SOURCES INDICATE THAT NETO LOST A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, 265-135; BY THE SAME MARGIN THE CONGRESS CONDEMNED NETO FOR HAVING ORDERED THE EXECUTION OF CHIPENDA EMISSARIES WHO HAD GONE TO BRAZZAVILLE IN 1973.

6. AFTER CENSURING NETO, THE CONGRESS COULD NOT AGREE ON NEW LEADERSHIP. NETO STILL HAD HIS ADHERENTS AND IT APPEARS THAT EVEN SOME OF THOSE WHO VOTED HIM DOWN WERE NOT READY TO OUST HIM FROM HIS POSITION. NETO COUNTERE-ATTACKED BY REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE VALIDITY OF THE TWO VOTES AGAINST HIM, DENOUNCING THE CONGRESS AS A CHIPENDA TOOL AND DARING THE REPRESENTATIVES TO SUBMIT TO A MEETING INSIDE ANGOLA, WHERE THE "PEOPLE" COULD CHOOSE THE LEADER.

7. ONE OF OUR SOURCES TOLD US THAT SOME NETO SUPPORTERS HAVE ALREADY ASKED THE JUNTA IN ANGOLA FOR A FORMAL TRUCE IN EASTERN ANGOLA IN ORDER TO PERMIT HIM TO CONVENE A CONGRESS NEAR LUSO IN LATE SEPTEMBER.

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8. THE FAILURE OF THE CONGRESS BENEFITS WHITE EXTREMISTS IN ANGOLA AND JONAS SAVIMBI'S UNITA. MPLA HAS LOST NEARLY ALL OF ITS FORMER WHITE SUPPORT SINCE THE COUP, PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF THE LURE OF UNITA'S MODERATION AND PARTIALLY BECAUSE THE MPLA INTERNAL STRUGGLE DOES NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE. MPLA, ESPECIALLY NETO, STILL HAS STRONG BLACK SUPPORT IN LUANDA BUT HAS NOT MADE ANY INROADS IN THE POPULOUS CENTER OF THE COUNTRY, WHERE UNITA IS GROWING RAPIDLY.

UNITA DOES HAVE SERIOUS PROBLESM OF COURSE; MANY BLACKS NOW LOOK UPON SAVIMBI AS A TRAITOR TO AFRICAN NATIONALISM. BOTH OUR SOURCES SAID ANDRADE'S "ACTIVE REVOLT" FACTION OF MPLA SEEMED TO HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH CHIPENDA'S MODERATION THAN NETO'S DOGMATISM.

9. IT LOOKS FROM HERE THAT MPLA IS NOW IRREPARABLY DIVIDED; EACH GROUP WILL CLAIM TO BE THE TRUE PARTY AND WILL ATTACK THE OTHER AS A HERETICAL FACTION. CHIPENDA MUST FEEL THAT HE NOW HAS THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE MAJORITY OF MPLA ACTIVISTS AND IS NOT LIKELY TO ALLOW THE UPCOMING AFRICAN SUMMIT IN BRAZZAVILLE TO IMPOSE NETO ON HIM. FOR HIS PART NETO IS UNLIKELY TO EITHER STEP DOWN OR TO ACCEPT A LESSER POSITION IN MPLA UNDER CHIPENDA OR ANDRADE. NO AMOUNT OF PATCHING UP IN THE FORM OF A CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND OTHER SUPREME ORGANS WILL BE ABLE TO HIDE THE FACT THAT THE CHIPENDA AND NETO FACTIONS ARE INDEPENDENT ENTITIES. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO ARE PERSONAL, NOT IDEOLOGICAL, AND IF ONE LEAVES THE SCENE THE TWO GROUPS MIGHT AGAIN WORK TOGETHER.

10. THE ANGOLAN JUNTA HAD HOPED THAT THE MPLA CONGRESS WOULD BRING ABOUT THE UNIFICATION OF THE MOVEMENT IN ORDER THAT THE ALREADY COMPLEX BUSINESS OF FORMING A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT NO BE MADE ANY MORE DIFFICULT. NOW THAT THE CONGRESS HAS FAILED, THE JUNTA REALIZES IT IS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL IN THE FUTURE WITH TWO MPLA FACTIONS, IN ADDITION TO FNLA, UNITA AND A WHITE ANGOLAN FACTION. AF FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATION AMONG THE VARIOUS LIBERATION GROUPS, CHIPENDA SAID IN THE INTERVIEW WE MENTIONED EARLIER THAT MPLA MUST JOIN A BROAD FRONT WITH FNLA. HE ADDED THAT UNITA PARTICIPATION IN THE FRONT WOULD DEPEND UPON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE "AFRIQUE-ASIE" EXPOSE OF ALLEGED SAVIMBI COLLABORATION WITH THE PORTUGUESE. CHIPENDA EMPHASIZED IN THE INTERVIEW THAT MPLA BY ITSELF COULD NOT CLAIM TO BE THE ONLY SPOKESMAN FOR ANGOLAN BLACKS, NOR COULD IT UNILATERALLY DEFINE THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE.

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